

LINUX DESKTOP HACKS™

*100 Industrial-Strength
Tips & Tools*



O'REILLY®

Nicholas Petreley & Jono Bacon



HACK

#54

View Word and PDF Files from Within Mutt

View Microsoft Word documents and PDF files you receive as attachments in email right inside the email client as part of the body of the message.

Mutt is an extremely powerful terminal-based email client that supports IMAP, POP, and much more. No graphical email client can come close to the configurability of Mutt. That's why a lot of hard-core Linux users still use Mutt in spite of the myriad GUI-based email clients.

It is certainly possible to launch a GUI application such as OpenOffice.org or Acrobat Reader to view Word and PDF email attachments in Mutt. But Mutt users aren't always using a graphical desktop, so it's handy to be able to view these documents as text, right inside the message itself.

Here's how to do it. First, you need to edit the Mutt configuration file. The default configuration file is usually */etc/Muttrc*, but you'll most likely want to create your own even if you do it by copying the default and modifying it. Mutt lets you define your user configuration file as either *~/.muttrc* or *~/.mutt/muttrc*. Modify your personal Mutt configuration file to point to a custom mailcap file. For example:

```
set mailcap_path=~/.mailcap.mutt"
```

Then edit the *~/.mailcap.mutt* file to include these two lines:

```
application/pdf; pdftohtml -q -stdout %s | w3m -T text/html; copiousoutput
```

```
application/msword; wvWare -x /usr/lib/wv/wvHtml.xml %s 2>/dev/null | w3m -T  
text/html; copiousoutput
```

Now all attached PDF and Microsoft Word documents will appear within the text of the email. Granted, the formatting isn't as pretty as when you view Word or PDF documents [Hacks #52 and #53], because all the output is piped into Mutt's own display, and not in a specialized pager, such as *elinks* or *w3m*. But you can still read the content of the attached file. And if it interests you enough to read it in a better format, you can save the file and read it with whatever program you want—including one of the scripts in the previously mentioned hacks.